

Message Text

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SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT: RTB SERIES ON COMPETING AIRCRAFT

1. BELGIAN FRENCH-LANGUAGE TV (RTB) CARRIED A FOUR PART SERIES ON F-104 REPLACEMENT ISSUE AS PART OF MAIN EVENING NEWS OCTOBER 7-10. PROGRAM CONSISTED OF 3 FIVE MINUTE PRESENTATIONS OF FRENCH, SWEDISH AND AMERICAN AIRCRAFT, PRECEDED BY A INTRODUCTORY PORGRAM ON WHY REPLACEMENT IS NECESSARY.

2. IN FIRST REPORT, BELGIAN AIR FORCE COLONEL (TERRASSON) EXPLAINED THAT ALL FOUR PLANES IN COMPETITION MET TECH-
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NICAL SPECIFICATIONS OF THE BAF AND THAT THE DECISION WOULD

THUS BE BASED ON ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

3. SECOND REPORT, DEVOTED TO FRENCH MIRAGE, INCLUDED INTERVIEW WITH DASSAULT GENERAL MANAGER VALLIERES EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC COMPENSATIONS OFFERED. SAID DASSAULT WAS OFFERING GENUINE CO-PRODUCTION ROLE THAT WENT FAR BEYOND COMPENSATIONS, AS BELGIUM WOULD BE ONLY MANUFACTURER OF CERTAIN PARTS. MENTION WAS MADE THAT MIRAGE F-1/M53 WAS F-1 WHICH WOULD HAVE A NEW ENGINE. FILM CLIPS SHOWED F-1 IN FLIGHT.

4. THIRD REPORT, DEVOTED TO SWEDISH "VIGGEN" INCLUDED INTERVIEW WITH SAAB PRESIDENT WHO DESCRIBED COMPENSATIONS OFFERED AS REACHING 200PCT OF ORDER. SAID THAT FACT THAT SWEDEN IS NEITHER MEMBER OF NATO NOR OF EEC NOT A DISADVANTAGE AS PLANE WOULD BE ENTIRELY CONSTRUCTED IN PURCHASING COUNTRIES WHICH COULD CARRY ON PRODUCTION EVEN IN EVENT OF POSSIBLE POLITICAL DISAGREEMENT WITH SWEDEN.

5. FOURTH AND LAST REPORT DISCUSSED YF-16 AND YF-17. RTB REPORTER ANDRE URBAIN SAID THAT "OF ALL THE PLANES, THE AMERICAN ONES ARE PROBABLY THE MOST SOPHISTICATED. THEY ARE A NEW GENERATION PLANE, LESS HEAVY, AND LESS MASSIVE. THE AMERICANS CONSIDER THAT, IN PRESENT STATE OF MILITARY TACTICS, WHAT IS PRIMARILY REQUIRED FROM SUCH PLANE IS THAT IT BE VERY FLEXIBLE. THEREFORE, IT MUST INCORPORATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE VERY LATEST TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS, BOTH FOR ITS STEERING AND ITS ARMAMENT. THUS RESEARCHERS HAVE DEVELOPED NEW GENERATION OF PLANES. . . . A CLEAR ADVANTAGE BECAUSE OF THEIR NEWNESS AND SOPHISTICATION, ALSO PARADOXICALLY A SHORTCOMING, . . . AS THEIR WEAKNESSES ARE NOT YET KNOWN."

URBAIN LISTED CHARACTERISTICS OF BOTH PLANES, ADDING THAT ADVICE OF BELGIUM AND THREE OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WILL CARRY SOME WEIGHT IN USAF CHOICE BETWEEN TWO PLANES. THIS WAS CONFIRMED BY USAF ASST. SECRETARY SCHRONTZ IN INTERVIEW WHO SAID "WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT 'CONSORTIUM' COUNTRIES WILL PARTICIPATE WITH US BETWEEN NOW AND THAT TIME (OF USAF DECISION) IN TERMS OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ADVICE AND COUNSEL."

URBAIN WENT ON TO SAY THAT AMERICANS ARE VERY SENSITIVE TO EUROPEANS' DECISION." IN SOME POLITICAL CIRCLES IT IS EVEN CONSIDERED AS A TEST FOR THE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED. LET US REMEMBER IN THIS RESPECT THAT THE U.S. CONGRESS HAS ADOPTED ACT REQUIRING THAT COST OF PRESENCE OF GIS IN EUROPE BE OFFSET BY SALES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO

EUROPEANS..."

INTERVIEW WITH ASST. SECRETARY SCHRONTZ
STRESSED DESIRABILITY OF US AND FOUR "CONSORTIUM"
NATO COUNTRIES BUYING SAME PLANE TO STANDARDIZE
EQUIPMENT. URBAIN CONTINUED: "FROM ECONOMIC VIEWPOINT
THE AMERICANS MUST MAKE US FORGET THE BAD MEMORY OF THE
COMPENSATIONS FOR C-130 WHICH WERE LIMITED, ROUGHLY
SPEAKING, TO EXPORTS OF MARMALADE AND CHICORY. THIS TIME
THEY ARE PROMISING A REAL CO-PRODUCTION PROGRAM." ASST.
SECRETARY SHCRONTZ OUTLINED US ECONOMIC OFFSET OFFER WITH
DETAILS LISTENERS COULD READILY GRASP TO UNDERSTAND HOW
US THIS TIME HAD GONE FAR BEYOND PREVIOUS INDUSTRIAL COMPENSATION
PROGRAMS TO BELGIAN INDUSTRY.

6. COMMENT: ENTIRE RTB SERIES WAS BALANCED AND
OBJECTIVE. IT GAVE TO THE THREE COMPETITORS - SINCE BOTH US
PLANES WERE JOINTLY PRESENTED -- ROUGHLY THE SAME AIR TIME
AND A SYMETRICLA PRESENTATION: PLANES SHOWN IN FLIGHT,
DESCRIPTION, PROS AND CONS, AND INTERVIEWS WITH REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE COMPETITORS. WE BELIEVE EFFORTS ON THE PART OF ALL
WHO HAD A HAND IN THE US PORTION (PARTICULARLY USAF
ASST. SECRETARY SHRONTZ) WERE WELL WORTH TIME SPENT.
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